Reform Support Network

EDUCATOR EVALUATION: REACHING AND ENGAGING THE MOST CRITICAL STAKEHOLDERS

MARCH 10, 2014

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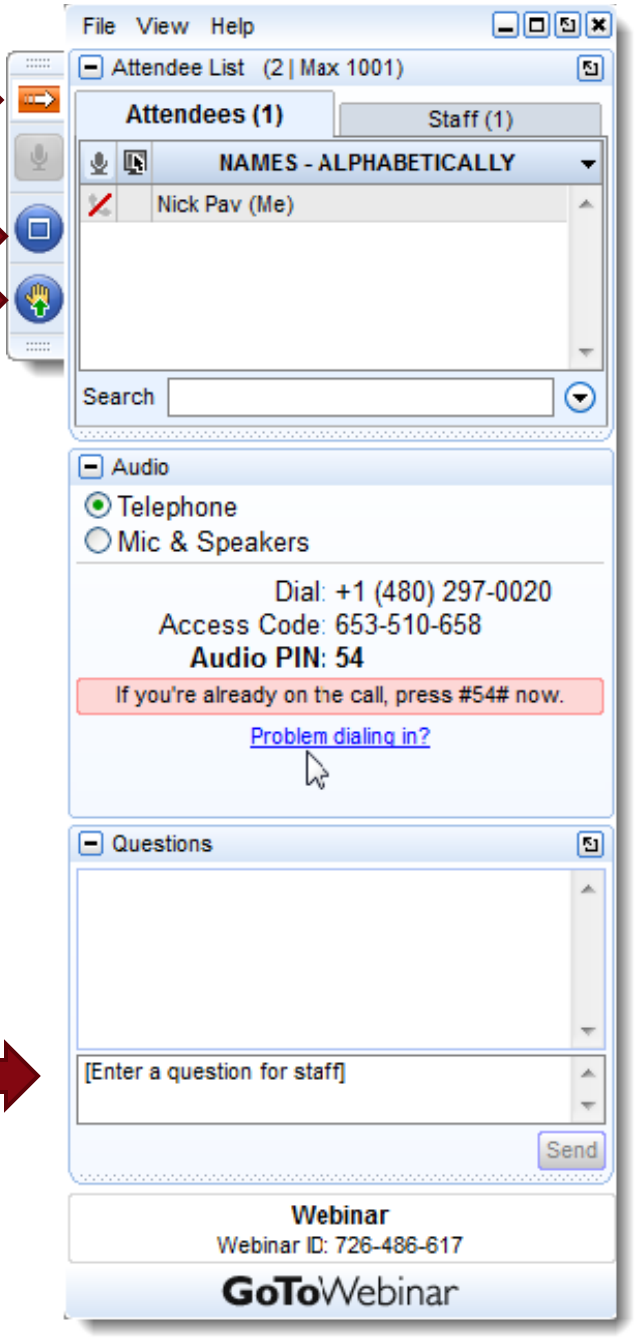

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TODAY'S AGENDA

- Welcome and Objectives
- Communications 101
- Communicating About Evaluations
- Questions and Discussion
- Voices from the Field: Tennessee
- Voices from the Field: West Virginia
- Questions and Discussion
- Overview of the RSN Communications Toolkit
- Close

TODAY'S OBJECTIVES

By the end of this webinar, participants will:

- Understand basic communications principles and how to use the RSN's "4 I's" framework
- Understand how two states have addressed their communications challenges
- Learn strategies to engage educators in a discussion about their new evaluation systems
- Learn how they can use existing RSN tools to improve their communications with educators about their new evaluation systems

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THE REFORM SUPPORT NETWORK

The Reform Support Network (RSN) was formed by the U.S. Department of Education to offer collective and individualized technical assistance and resources to State grantees of the Race to the Top education reform initiative.

Its work centers around five core areas:

Teacher & Leader Effectiveness/ Standards & Assessments

School Turnaround

State Education Agency Capacity Building

Instructional Improvement & Data Systems

Stakeholder Communications and Engagement

COMMUNICATIONS 101

EDUCATOR EVALUATION COMMUNICATIONS TOOLKIT

EDUCATOR EVALUATION COMMUNICATIONS TOOLKIT

Key components include:

- Communications Principles and Approaches
- Getting the Message Right
- Communicating about Value-Added Data
- RSN Educator Engagement Guide
- Framework to Define the Purpose of Communications and Engagement
- Educator Engagement: What Works?
- What Teachers Really Want to Know about Evaluations
- Templates and tools

WHEN COMMUNICATING ABOUT EVALUATION, DON'T FORGET:

- Communication with educators is a **vital component** of evaluations to ensure educators understand the new evaluation system, how it works and what they will be affected by the change.
- Educators want to be **meaningfully engaged** throughout the process and to feel that their voices are not only heard, but acted on.
- States that clearly and thoughtfully communicate with their educators about a new system are more likely to abate criticism, the spread of misinformation and unnecessary concerns.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY?

- Build understanding and support across and among stakeholders
- Stop the spread of misinformation, rumors and distrust
- Bring in valuable feedback and input from stakeholders
- Successfully promote what's working and directly address what isn't

THE COMMUNICATIONS CHAIN

SEA

District Leaders

Building Principals

Teachers

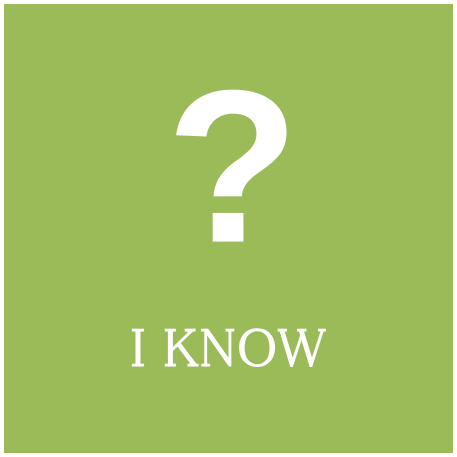
Families

THE "4 I'S" FRAMEWORK DEFINES THE PURPOSE OF YOUR EFFORTS

DOMAINS FOR EDUCATOR ENGAGEMENT

There are four major domains of educator engagement.

Understand the underlying policies and systems.



Put into practice what they know or learned.

Gain deep understanding & engage in design work.

Take responsibility for active engagement & improvement.

10 KEY STRATEGIES

1. **Clarify your goals.** Be clear on what you want to accomplish and what you want people to do.
2. **Identify your audiences and speak to them.** Differentiate messages to provide people with the information they need.
3. **Keep it simple.** Be clear, concise and crisp in your writing and present everything in an easy-to-understand format.
4. **Share what's essential.** In-the-weeds minutiae can be overwhelming and obscure the bigger picture. Avoid needless details.
5. **Use real world examples.** Let others help tell your story by involving teacher testimony, video and case studies

10 KEY STRATEGIES (CONT.)

6. **Use multiple vehicles.** Develop a strategy that employs a mix of options to reach the largest possible audience
7. **Use multiple voices.** Teachers and principals respond more positively to messages they hear from their peers.
8. **Communicate early and often.** Don't let your educators read about something that impacts them in the paper. Provide a relevant, reliable source of information
9. **Remember your team.** Make sure your internal team is kept informed so, if asked, they can answer questions
10. **Buddy up.** Partner with like-minded organizations to add their voices, build credibility and expand your reach

COMMUNICATING ABOUT TEACHER EVALUATION REFORM

David Keeling, TNTP Vice President for Communications

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TNTP has supported the design and implementation of new evaluation systems in a number of major districts and states.

Houston Independent School District
Effective Teachers Initiative

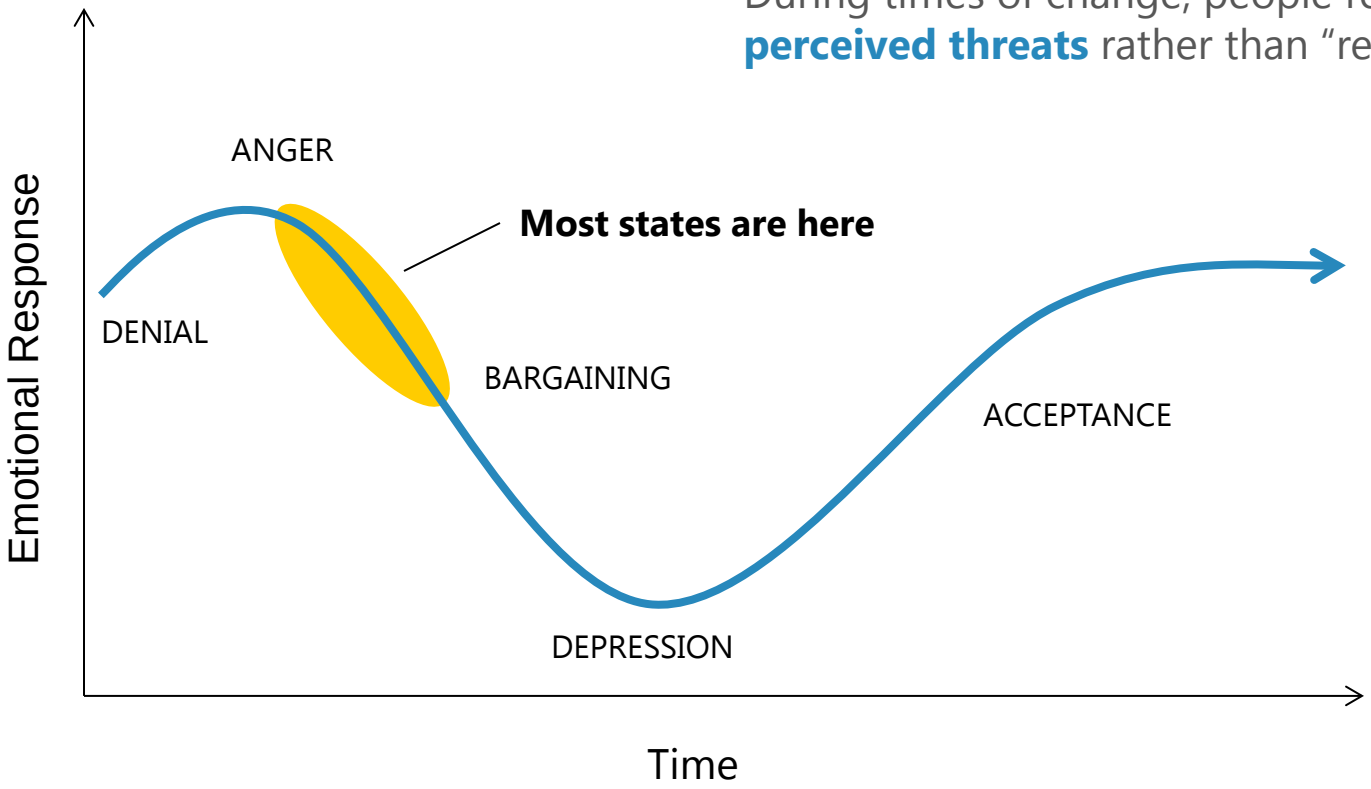
New York City Department of Education
Advance Teacher Evaluation & Development System

Indiana Department of Education
RISE Evaluation & Development System

Louisiana Department of Education
Compass Educator Support & Evaluation System

Educators' responses to the stress and disruption of evaluation system changes tend to follow a familiar pattern.

During times of change, people react to **perceived threats** rather than "reality."



Evaluation reform is about much more than introducing new processes or policies. **It's about managing change. Effective communication is critical.**

What to Say: Important Messaging Themes

- **Multiple measures:** No single measure can completely capture the complex work of teaching. That's why we always use multiple measures of performance, including….
- **Helping teachers grow:** Like all professionals, Teachers need honest feedback in order to do their best work and make a difference in their students' lives. That's the main purpose of a stronger evaluation system.
- **Recognizing excellence:** A stronger evaluation system not only helps teachers continually improve, it also helps us recognize those getting extraordinary results.
- **This will take time:** Improving evaluations across our state will take time. Not everything will go perfectly. But we're committed to being as transparent as possible about the process and to getting it right.
- **We want your help:** We want evaluations to be more meaningful and useful. We need your feedback on what's working and what's not working in order to get there.

How to Say It: Three Rules for Communicating in High-Stress Environments

	HOW?	WHY?
1 **Be concise**	**Limit number and length of messages** • No more than 3 messages at a time • Keep messages short and simple	Mental noise and stress reduce the ability to process information by as much as 80%
2 **Be clear**	**Use plain language** • 6th-8th grade reading level • Short, simple sentences • Avoid jargon • Use active voice	People under stress understand information at about four grades below their education level
3 **Be caring**	**Empathize** • Listen and engage • Solicit feedback • Acknowledge stress / disruption • Face to face dialogue	"People want to know that you care, before they care what you know."

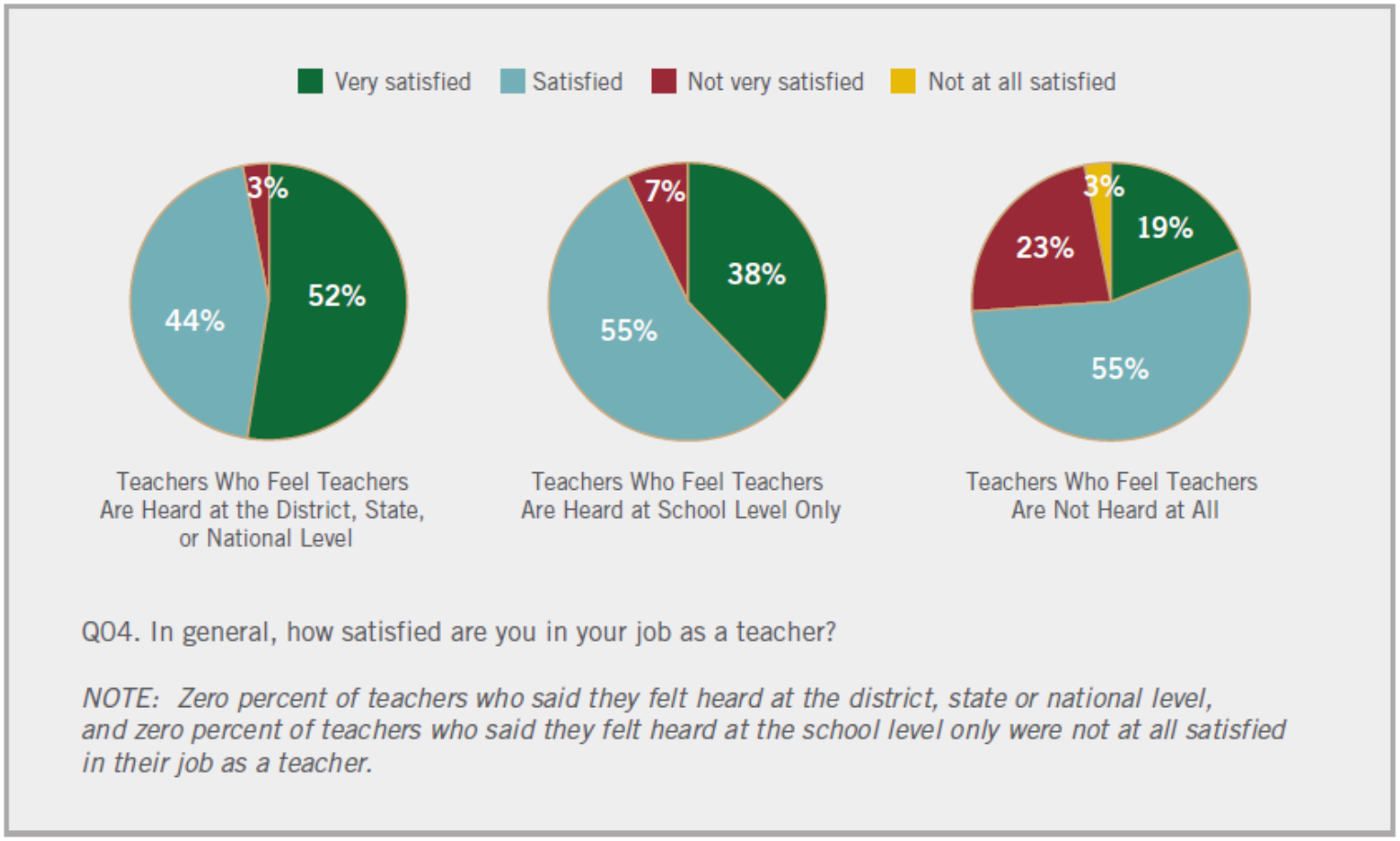
Reference: Wojtecki, Jr., Joseph G., and Peters, Richard G. "Communicating Organizational Change." Center for Risk Communication, 2000.

"**The simple act of listening** to an employee's concerns is one of the most compelling gestures a manager can make to demonstrate caring and empathy."

Teachers who do not feel heard are less satisfied with their jobs.

Teachers' Degree of Satisfaction in Their Job as a Teacher, by Degree to Which They Feel the Voices of "Teachers like me" Are Heard and Valued

Base: Total Respondents.



Source: "Primary Sources: America's Teachers on Teaching in an Era of Change." A joint project of Scholastic and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Third Edition, 2014.

What Communications Can't Fix: Substantive Implementation Problems

- ✖ Inflated ratings
- ✖ Burdensome processes
- ✖ Poorly trained evaluators
- ✖ Scoring errors
- ✖ Timing problems
- ✖ Testing issues

Your message must be rooted in reality and credible to people in schools.

Messages about big problems should focus on acknowledging the issue and how you're going to fix it.

DISCUSSION

- What approach have you found most effective in your state to reach all stakeholders?
- What particular strategies have worked best to reach educators?
- What are some of the most common communications challenges you have encountered?
- How have you addressed them?

VOICES FROM THE FIELD: TENNESSEE & WEST VIRGINIA

Lessons Learned in Tennessee: Communication and Continuous Improvement

Sara Heyburn, Tennessee Department of Education

March 10, 2014

Now in Y3, what have we learned?

The importance of high-quality communication and continuous improvement

- Ensure that a “feedback loop” is in place that ensures continuous improvement within the implementation process.
- Determine how to provide timely information.
- Identify key partners and engage them in the process, acknowledging that sometimes we need “critical friends.”
- Identify leaders in the field and provide opportunities for them to share best and next practices with their peers.

So, what did we do?

Y1 Listening Tour

- In December 2011, Governor Bill Haslam asked SCORE to conduct a formal statewide listening and feedback process, independent of state government, on Tennessee's new teacher evaluation system.
- SCORE's role was to LISTEN.
- This work supplemented additional feedback being collected by the Tennessee Department of Education and TNCRED.
- SCORE partnered with the following organizations to gather feedback from educators and other citizens across Tennessee:

More Than 27,000 Inputs in SCORE's Feedback Process During Year One Implementation

Regional roundtables	• Nine roundtables held across all three Grand Divisions	• Panel discussions • Audience member surveys
Online educator questionnaire	• 15,401 teachers • 932 principals and 831 other evaluators	• Online questionnaire responses
Educator work team	• Teachers, principals, and district leaders from across the three Grand Divisions	• Work team discussions
In-depth **interviews with leaders on teacher evaluation** systems in Tennessee and across the nation	• Leaders of each of the four approved models (TEAM, TEM, TIGER, COACH) • Additional inputs with individuals from the Danielson Group, Stanford's Center on School Redesign, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's Measures of Effective Teaching Project, the New Teacher Project, and Student Achievement Partners	• Educator surveys from TEM and COACH • Current research and publications on teacher evaluation
Input from **existing networks and individuals** outside of formal channels	• Superintendents' Study Councils, Tennessee Principals Association, Principal/Supervisors' Study Council, Tennessee Education Association Survey, and others	• Public recommendations • Group discussions • Emails / phone calls

Results of the Y1 Feedback Process

- Collected extensive feedback from educators and other stakeholders across the state on the successes and challenges of implementation of the new teacher evaluation system.
- Made policy and statute changes based on feedback and data that helped improve the system moving forward.
- Issued a comprehensive, public Y1 report on implementation successes, challenges and ways we were working to address them.
- Honed systems of communication and support moving into Y2.

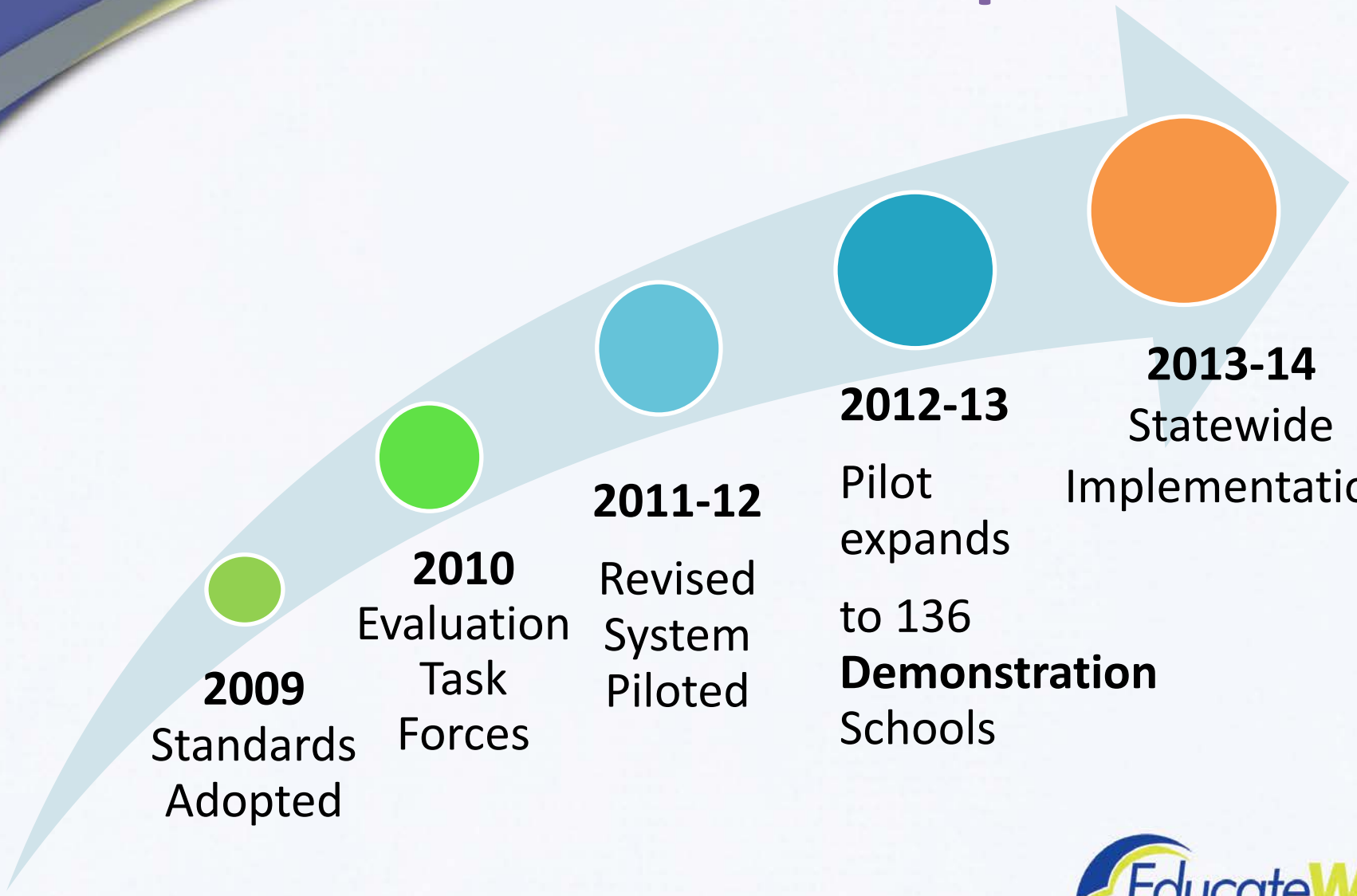
West Virginia Educator Evaluation

March 10, 2014

Liza Cordeiro
Trent Danowski

Enhancing Learning. For Now. For the Future

Historical Perspective



Inform and Inquire: Stakeholder Groups

- The West Virginia Educator Evaluation Taskforce is Comprised of Representation from:
  - WV Board of Education
  - WV Department of Education
  - District Superintendents
  - School Principals
  - Classroom Teachers & School Counselors
  - Professional Organizations

Creating System Infrastructure

- All Infrastructure for the WV Educator Evaluation System was Developed In-House:
  - The On-line Evaluation System
  - System Training for Educators
  - The WV Educator Evaluation Website- (http://wvde.state.wv.us/evalwv/)
  - The Educator Evaluation Guidebooks & Guidance Documents

Communications Strategy

- Created on a Limited Budget
- New Vocabulary
- What do Educators Need to Know?
  - Not a “Gotcha” System
  - Educators have a Voice in Evaluation
  - System is About Educator Improvement

Inspiring Information

- We Knew That While Continuing to Inform We Also Needed to Engage and Inspire
  - Branded the WV Educator Evaluation System
    - Logo, Flyers, Website
  - Video
  - Message to Every Teacher from State Superintendent
  - Testimonials
  - Statewide Articles
  - Monthly Direct Communication with Teachers
  - Other Resources

Evolving Strategies

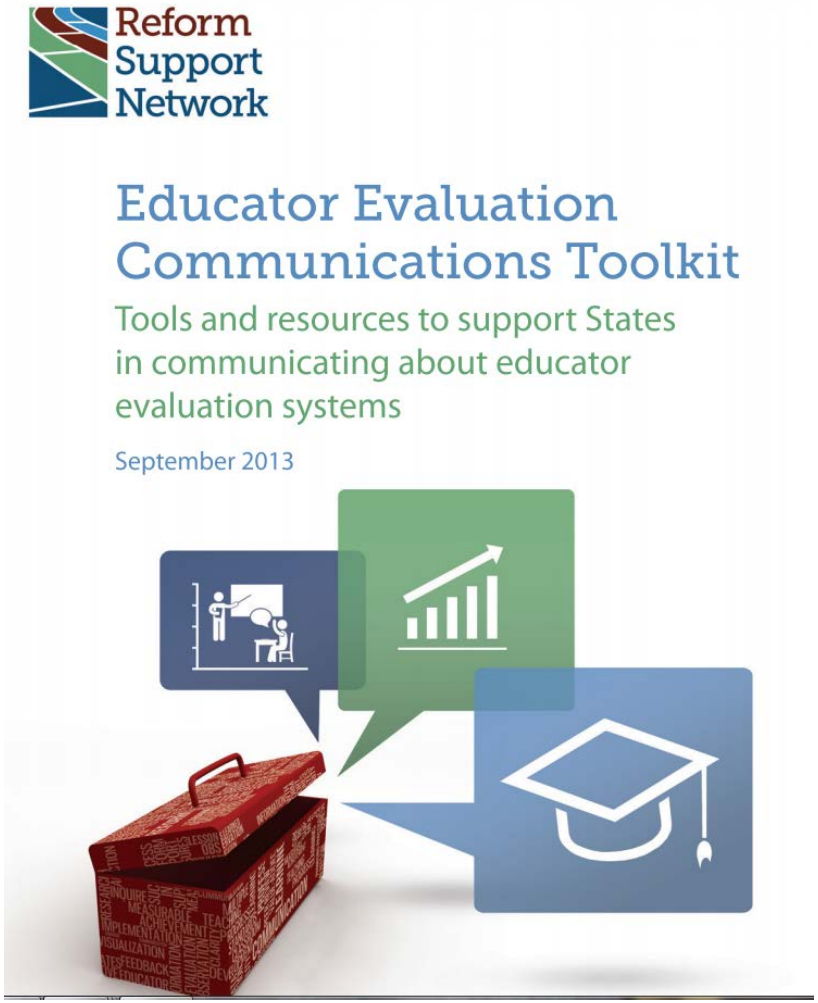
- We Recognized Our Weaknesses In Our Outreach
  - Measurable Goals
    - Survey
  - Two-Way Communication
    - Utilizing Social Media
  - Importance of Evolving Strategies
  - Bracing for Pushback
  - Stealing Good Ideas

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION

- How do the experiences of TN and WV mirror the conditions you are facing in your state?
- Which of their strategies might you want to replicate? How would your improve on them?
- What other suggestions do you have?

EDUCATOR EVALUATION COMMUNICATIONS TOOLKIT

Reform Support Network



http://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/implementation-support-unit/tech-assist/educator-evaluation-communications-toolkit.pdf

THANK YOU & UPCOMING EVENTS

Thank you for your participation today.

Please complete a brief evaluation of this learning module at this address: https://www.research.net/s/CRQJZHN

The next RSN webinar is scheduled for April, 2014 focusing on Data Analytics.

THANK YOU